

REMARKS

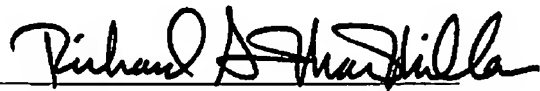
In Paragraph 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner requested that the language used to describe the invention be clarified. Portions of the specification and Claim 1 have been amended to do so.

In Paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner requested that the offsetting relationship of the mass distribution portions be defined more clearly. Claims 1 and 8 have been amended to do so. In Paragraph 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner also requested that the claims be amended to recite that the second wall thickness extends along the entire longitudinal length of the tube. This relationship is not believed to be necessary and, therefore, the request has not been adopted. The Examiner noted that this relationship was apparently an advantage over the prior art, noting the prior use of discrete balancing weights. However, the claimed method recites that the wall thickness of the tube varies about the circumference thereof. Such wall thickness variations are quite different from the securing of discrete balance weights to the tube mentioned by the Examiner.

In Paragraph 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner requested that Claim 8 be amended to include an overbalanced yoke that is secured to the tube. This request has not been adopted. The claimed invention relates not only to the balancing of a combined driveshaft tube and yoke assembly, but also to the balancing of the driveshaft tube itself. When a tube is manufactured by rolling a flat sheet of material into a tube and welding the adjacent longitudinal edges together, it has been found that the circumferentially extending portion of the longitudinal weld seam 40 has a larger mass distribution than the remaining circumferentially extending portions thereof. Thus, the tube itself is unbalanced for rotation. The invention defined in Claim 8 contemplates that the flat sheet be formed including a region having a thicker wall thickness than the remaining portions thereof. As a result, when the sheet is rolled about a longitudinal axis and the lateral edges are welded together, the mass distribution defined by the region offsets the mass distribution defined by the welded lateral edges. It is not necessary that a yoke be secured to the tube to achieve the benefits of the invention.

New independent Claim 12 defines the invention as a method of manufacturing a tube including the initial step of providing a sheet of material having first and second edges, wherein the sheet of material has first wall thickness portions that extend from the first and second longitudinally extending edges and a second wall thickness portion that extends between the first wall thickness portions. Then, the sheet of material is rolled such that the first and second edges are located adjacent to one another. Lastly, the first and second edges are secured together to form a tube having a first mass distribution defined by the second wall thickness portion that offsets a second mass distribution defined by the first wall thickness portions. For the same reasons as set forth by the Examiner in the Office Action, it is believed that Claim 12 is patentable over the art of record.

Respectfully submitted,



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